

Paediatric Intensive Care Audit Network (PICANet)

National Paediatric Critical Care Audit State of the Nation Report 2024

An overview of paediatric critical care in 2023

There were 18,498 PICU admissions for children aged 0-15 years in 2023. Around two thirds of these were from the same hospital and one-third were from another hospital with 38% coming from theatre and recovery, 24% from A&E and 22% from a ward.

During their PICU stay, 61% of admissions required invasive ventilation and 20% required non-invasive ventilation, 32% required vasoactive treatment, 1.2% received ECMO and 3% needed renal support.

Most children survived their PICU admission (96.3%) and of these a small percentage were discharged for palliative care (1%). Where the child survived PICU, 82% of admissions were discharged to the same hospital and 12% to another hospital, mostly children who were discharged back to the ward (82%) or HDU (13%).

Of the 685 admissions where the child died in PICU: treatment was withdrawn in two-thirds of cases; treatment was limited in 17%; death by neurological criteria occurred in 8% and death was due to failed cardiopulmonary resuscitation in a further 8%. Twenty-nine (4%) of those who died were transplant donors.

In addition to the 18,498 admissions for children to PICU in 2023, there were 531 children admitted to adult ICUs across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland with over half (55%) for children aged 10 years or under. Admission of children to adult ICU was most common in October, November and December.

In 2023, there were 5,804 transports reported to PICANet of which the majority (n=4,192, 72%) were non-elective transports to PICU.